

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 204192
ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SIG-03 /014 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:AF/E:KPGARLAND

APPROVED BY:AF/E:GBEYER

-----072271 130252Z /15

R 112320Z AUG 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 204192

FOLLOWING REPEAT ADDIS ABABA 3509 ACTION SECSTATE
INFO USCINCEUR 10 AUG 78.

QUOTE:C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 3509

DEPT PASS HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, ET

SUBJ: ETHIOPIAN FORCES CAPTURE AGORDAT

REF: ADDIS ABABA 3385

1. THE ETHIOPIAN NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY OPERATIONS COMMAND (NROC) AT 2030L 9 AUGUST ANNOUNCED THE RECAPTURE OF AGORDAT (15 32 N 39 05 E) AT 1200 HOURS ON 9 AUG 1978. AGORDAT HAD BEEN THE CAPITAL OF THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT (ELF) FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS. THE CITY WAS CAPTURED BY TASK FORCES 502 AND 507 WHICH WERE DEPLOYED FROM BARENTU (15 08 N 31 37 E) ON 4 AUGUST.

2. THE NROC COMMUNIQUE CLAIMED THAT THE ELF WAS JOINED BY FORCES FROM THE ERITREAN PEOPLE'S LIBERATION FRONT (EPLF)
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 204192

AND THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT/POPULAR LIBERATION FORCES (ELF/PLF) IN AN UNSUCCESSFUL JOINT EFFORT TO HALT THE ETHIOPIAN ADVANCE TOWARDS AGORDAT 7 KILOMETERS NORTHEAST OF BARENTU (BEDRAFAN PASS). RADIO COMMENTARY CALLED THIS A "DECISIVE VICTORY POLITICALLY AND MILITARILY."

3. WE HAVE HAD NO INFORMATION ON THE SEVERITY OF THE FIGHT-

ING DURING THIS LATEST ADVANCE. NOR HAVE WE HAD ANY INDICATION AS TO WHETHER THE ELF ATTEMPTED TO HOLD AGORDAT AGAINST SUPERIOR ETHIOPIAN CONVENTIONAL FORCES OR WHETHER THEY MADE A TACTICAL WITHDRAWAL IN ORDER TO CONTINUE TO WAGE GUERRILLA WARFARE ON MORE FAVORABLE TERRAIN AND TERMS. ETHIOPIAN CLAIMS OF OBJECTIVES REACHED HAVE IN THE PAST BEEN CONFIRMED. WE, THEREFORE, GIVE CREDENCE TO THE CLAIM THAT ETHIOPIAN FORCES ENTERED AGORDAT. THE CLAIM THAT THE THREE ERITREAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS FINALLY COORDINATED IN A MILITARY OPERATION SEEMS UNLIKELY BASED ON THEIR PAST LACK OF SUCCESS IN DOING SO AND THEIR APPARENT CHANGE IN STRATEGY FROM CONVENTIONAL TO UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE IN THE FACE OF OVERWHELMING ETHIOPIAN SUPERIORITY IN ARMOR AND ARTILLERY (REFTEL). THE FACT THAT THE ETHIOPIANS ARE MAKING THIS CLAIM RATHER THAN THE ERITREANS MAKES THE ALLEGATION EVEN MORE SUSPECT. INDICATIONS AVAILABLE TO US INDICATE THAT FORCES FROM THE THREE ERITREAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS WERE PRESENT IN THE BEDRAFAN PASS AREA. WE CONSIDER IT LIKELY ALL WERE ENGAGED TO SOME EXTENT, BUT DOUBT THEY FORMED A JOINT MILITARY COMMAND. ERITREAN STRATEGY BY ALL THREE MOVEMENTS NOW APPEARS TO BE TO HOLD STRONG POSITIONS AGAINST ETHIOPIAN ATTACKS INITIALLY, BUT TO FADE AWAY BEFORE TAKING UNACCEPTABLE RISKS OR LOSSES. IT IS PROBABLY THAT THE NEXT OBJECTIVE OF THE ETHIOPIAN FORCES WILL BE KEREN (15 47 N 38 28 E), THE CAPITAL OF THE EPLF. ETHIOPIAN FORCES WILL LIKELY ADVANCE NORTHEAST FROM AGORDAT, RATHER THAN NORTHWEST FROM ASMARA THROUGH MORE DIFFICULT TERRAIN.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 204192

ETHIOPIAN FORCES WILL PROBABLY REQUIRE A BREATHER AND CHANCE TO BUILD UP IN AGORDAT BEFORE PURSUING THEIR ADVANCE.

CHAPIN

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY OCCUPIED AREAS, COMBAT OPERATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE204192
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: AF/E:KPGARLAND
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780331-0031
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780872/aaaacial.tel
Line Count: 98
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7fd48264-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 ADDIS ABABA 3385
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1763229
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ETHIOPIAN FORCES CAPTURE AGORDAT
TAGS: MOPS, ET
To: HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7fd48264-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014